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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Items 33, 35, 53 and 56 of the
preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF
AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 3 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-eighth session, held at Riyadh on 16 and 17 March 1996 under the chairmanship of Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 33, 35, 53 and 56 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Salim Bin Mohammed AL-KHUSSAIBY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Press Communiqué issued on 17 March 1996 by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council

The Ministerial Council held its fifty-eighth session on Saturday and Sunday 27 and 28 Shawwal 1416 (16-17 March 1996) at the headquarters of the Secretariat General in Riyadh, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman. The session was attended by:

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain
His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud Al-Faysal	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar
His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah	First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait

The Ministerial Council is pleased to express its deep satisfaction and joy at the recovery bestowed by God on the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Sa'ud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, beseeching God most High and most Powerful to grant him everlasting health and well-being and to bring ever-increasing prosperity to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Ministerial Council expressed its appreciation of the sincere efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in laying the foundations, at the end of the sixteenth session of the Supreme Council, held at Muscat, for the procedures for the nomination of the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council. At that time, the member States adopted the proposal of the Sultanate of Oman that the Secretary-General should be appointed by rotation, based on an alphabetical list of the names of the States, with the understanding that the procedure should be included in the Charter of the Council.

The Ministerial Council discussed the implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and noted with regret Iraq's failure to satisfy fundamental aspects of its international obligations under those resolutions. The Council also noted the suspicious behaviour of the Iraqi regime with regard to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the Iraqi regime continues to produce bacteriological weapons of an infectious nature capable of inflicting serious harm on Iraq itself and on the region, in addition to producing chemical and

radiation weapons. In this regard, the Council stresses the importance of supporting the efforts of the United Nations Commission entrusted with the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and calls upon the countries of the world to support those efforts materially and politically in order to guarantee the continuation of the Commission's work. In this connection, the Ministerial Council expressed its concern over the attempts by the Iraqi regime to use certain border points for smuggling in materials for developing its weapons of aggression and over its interference with the missions of the international inspection teams. This violation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) confirms the failure of the Iraqi regime to respond to all the calls for it to implement the United Nations resolutions relating to its aggression.

The Ministerial Council, painfully aware of the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people due to the deterioration of living and health conditions, places the full blame on the Iraqi regime, in view of the erroneous policy it has been following throughout this period. It points to the need for Iraq to implement resolution 986 (1995) in order to take advantage of its provisions aimed at dealing with the humanitarian needs of its people and alleviating their cruel suffering.

In this regard, the Council urges the international community to continue its pressure on the Iraqi Government until Iraq fully complies with the provisions of resolution 687 (1991) and other relevant international resolutions, in particular those pertaining to the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners, whose suffering has been prolonged by this flagrant violation of resolution 687 (1991) and of the third and fourth Geneva Conventions. It demands that the Republic of Iraq refrain from any hostile or provocative activity, in compliance with resolution 949 (1994); abide by the compensation mechanism, returning all property; and demonstrate its peaceful intentions to the international community through its policies and practices.

The Council also once again reaffirms its total rejection of any policy that would tend to impair the territorial integrity of Iraq and expresses its firm insistence on Iraq's sovereignty and the unity of its territory.

The Ministerial Council has studied the recent developments in the relations between the States of the Cooperation Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the question of the occupation of the three islands of Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates. The Council noted the Iranian Government's continued implementation of measures aimed at consecrating its occupation of the three islands, such as the building and opening of an airport on Abu Musa on 10 March, which constitutes an unwarranted provocative measure. The Council again expressed its extreme regret at the failure of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the repeated earnest, amicable invitations on the part of the United Arab Emirates aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to this issue. The Council also expressed its concern at the continued adoption by the Iranian Government of measures aimed at consecrating and consolidating its occupation of the three islands, thus violating the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and disrupting peace and stability in the region, in violation of the principles of international law, the Charter of the Islamic Conference, the principles of good-neighbourliness

and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region.

The Ministerial Council reaffirms its consistent position of support and assistance to the United Arab Emirates and renews its absolute endorsement of all peaceful measures adopted by the United Arab Emirates with a view to regaining its sovereignty over the three islands, Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra and Abu Musa, and calls upon Iran to agree to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the Middle East peace process. Based on the consistent positions of the States members of the Council in support of the peace process in the Middle East and with a view to arriving at a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region founded on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, the Council expressed its great appreciation of the international efforts made in that direction, especially those made by the United States of America in encouraging the parties concerned to make the desired progress on a bilateral basis.

The Council, in expressing its satisfaction at the holding of Palestinian legislative and presidential elections and the completion by the Israeli army of its redeployment away from most of the cities and villages of the West Bank in keeping with the second phase of the Palestinian Self-Government Arrangements, appeals to Israel to end the blockade imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; to implement the letter and the spirit of the bilateral agreements with the Palestinian side; to refrain from any practices incompatible with the trend towards peace in the region; and to begin the final-phase negotiations on a basis of total Israeli withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, so as to enable the Palestinian people to exercise all its lawful rights, including that of establishing an independent State on its native soil.

The Council also expresses the hope that efforts will be redoubled, especially those of the United States of America, to surmount the obstacles that stand in the way of Syrian-Israeli negotiations, and affirms its full support for the Syrian position calling for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. The Council also expresses its hope that progress will be achieved in Lebanese-Israeli relations, leading to the end of the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council expressed its profound appreciation of the efforts made by the Arab Republic of Egypt, headed by President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, to ensure the success of the Sharm al-Sheikh Summit for Peacemakers, and highlighted the significance of its positive outcome. It also renewed its full support for those efforts, appealing to all peace-loving States for constructive cooperation with a view to the formulation and implementation of effective practical measures which would help to promote and strengthen the Middle East peace process, safeguard its achievements and accomplishments and thwart any attempts to undermine them or prejudice the security and stability of the region and its future economic development.

The Council called upon the sponsors of the Summit to resume the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East with the aim of assessing the outcome of the peace process and of imparting to that process a powerful impetus that would help it to achieve its desired aims.

The Ministerial Council affirms the fact that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to a particular people or region. It renews its loathing and condemnation of such phenomena and its categorical rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, particularly those which are detrimental to security and stability in the region or which impede the peace process in the Middle East, and calls upon the international community to coordinate its efforts to stop acts of violence and terrorism, ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, and prevent extremist and terrorist elements from using the territory of any State for purposes of obtaining funding or arms supplies and from availing themselves of the media to incite acts of violence and terrorism.

Recalling the decisions of the Supreme Council at its sixteenth session, held in Muscat, on foreign media controls and media integrity, the Council reaffirms the importance of cooperation among the Council States in addressing biased media campaigns directed against any Council State and in taking common positions towards such campaigns. It equally affirms the importance of counteracting any media and press reports that are injurious to the Council States, of declining any form of support for the media involved and of refraining from quoting and circulating their reports.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the latest situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and praised the steps taken to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and affirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council noted with immense satisfaction the generous reaction by citizens of the Council States in solidarity with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in response to the initiatives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King of Saudi Arabia, and His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in organizing collections for donations to the people of Bosnia for the process of reconstruction and redevelopment.

The Ministerial Council also reviewed developments in the conflict between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea over Hanish island and stressed the need to contain the crisis between the two countries and seek a peaceful solution with a view to promoting justice, maintaining security, preventing escalation of the conflict and strengthening the historical relations between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea. The Council also stressed that the security of the Red Sea and the guaranteed freedom and safety of shipping therein were a matter of tremendous importance for all States in the region.

The Council appreciates the mediation efforts aimed at achieving genuine agreement between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea on the principle of peaceful settlement of the crisis in accordance with the rules of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the economic field, the Council discussed the external customs tariff and recalled the decision of the Supreme Council at its sixteenth session, held in Muscat on 4 December 1995. It highlighted the joint meeting between the Ministerial Council and the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation to be convened in June 1996 to find a solution compatible with the Unified Economic Agreement and the decisions of the Supreme Council that would be sufficiently flexible to obtain the required consensus.

The Council also adopted the executive regulations of the patent system of the Gulf Cooperation Council States and agreed the fees stipulated in that system. The Council negotiated with the administration of the patent office to amend the schedules for such fees whenever necessary.

In the field of negotiations with the European Union, the Council discussed the joint ministerial meeting to be held in Luxembourg next April. It also heard a detailed explanation from the general coordinator of negotiations and highlighted the importance of attaching greater significance to investment and trade between the Council States and the European Union and of giving the private sector the opportunity to express its view on those two questions.

The Council took note of the expert meetings on political and information dialogue recently concluded in Brussels between the Council States and the European Union, as well as of the meetings of businessmen at the European Commission and the opportunities available to them to benefit from the information available at the Commission. The Council also reviewed the strategy and mechanisms of the dialogue previously discussed in Muscat on 4 November 1995 with the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and the Standing Ministerial Committee for Petroleum Cooperation and gave the negotiating team appropriate directives.

The Council expressed its satisfaction at the success of the second conference of industrialists of the Council States and their United States counterparts, held in Manama from 10 to 13 March 1996 under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the sister State of Bahrain, and affirmed the importance and worth of such conferences in promoting the joint interests of the Council States and their partners in international economic groupings.

The Council also examined and took note of various official records of the ministerial committees in the fields of trade, industry, specifications and standards.

The Ministerial Council expressed its profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for the tremendous and sincere efforts of His Excellency Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan al-Qasimi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, over the past three years, during which considerable achievements were witnessed in the field of cooperation and integration among the Council States at all levels. At the same time, it commended His Excellency's significant contributions to stimulating joint action through quiet diplomacy, and his extraordinary political shrewdness and great aptitude, which had a very positive impact on cooperation.

The Council wished His Excellency Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan al-Qasimi success in his future missions.

The Ministerial Council expressed its sincere hope that His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General designate of the Gulf Cooperation Council, would successfully fulfil the mandates assigned to him and that his expertise would serve to promote the Council.